

# Effects of Childhood Trauma on Adult Functioning

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## Symptoms consistent with adult presentation of childhood abuse:

- mood disorder/affect dysregulation
  - impulsivity
- poor boundaries leading to victimization
- tension reduction activities (substance abuse, self harm, para-suicidal behaviors)
  - hospitalizations/suicide attempts
  - periods of dissociation
- inability to plan and follow through
- poor response to treatment interventions including psychotropic meds
  - flashbacks/hallucinations/voices
  - sleep problems
  - abandonment issues
- anxiety, depression, PTSD, BPD, Dissociative disorders

## I. Defining the experience of childhood abuse/trauma

### A. DSM IV criteria for a trauma:

1. experienced, witnessed or confronted event with actual or threatened death or serious injury to self or others
2. response included intense fear, helplessness, or horror (children agitated or disorganized behaviors)

B. Dissociation: “a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception” (American Psychological Association, 2000a, p. 519)

C. Imagine for a moment the experience of being abused by a parent as a child.  
(case example)

## II. Developmental issues:

A. Personality structuring

B. Affect regulation and dissociation

## III. Relational Issues:

A. Boundaries

B. Relational Paradoxes (attachment issues)